

Trends in U.S. and World Lobster Production, Imports and Exports

Joel Chetrick

Forest & Fishery Products Division

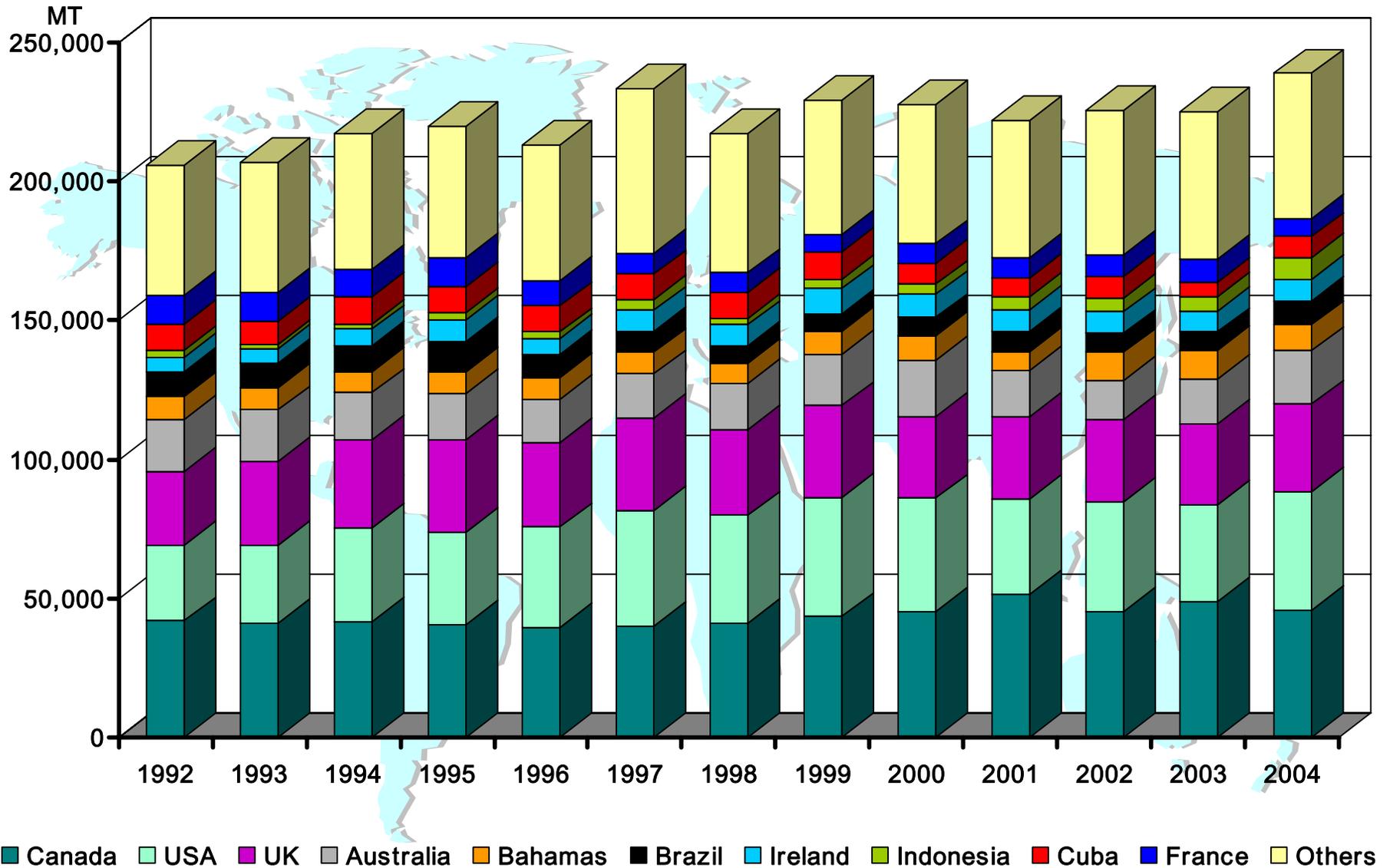
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Summary

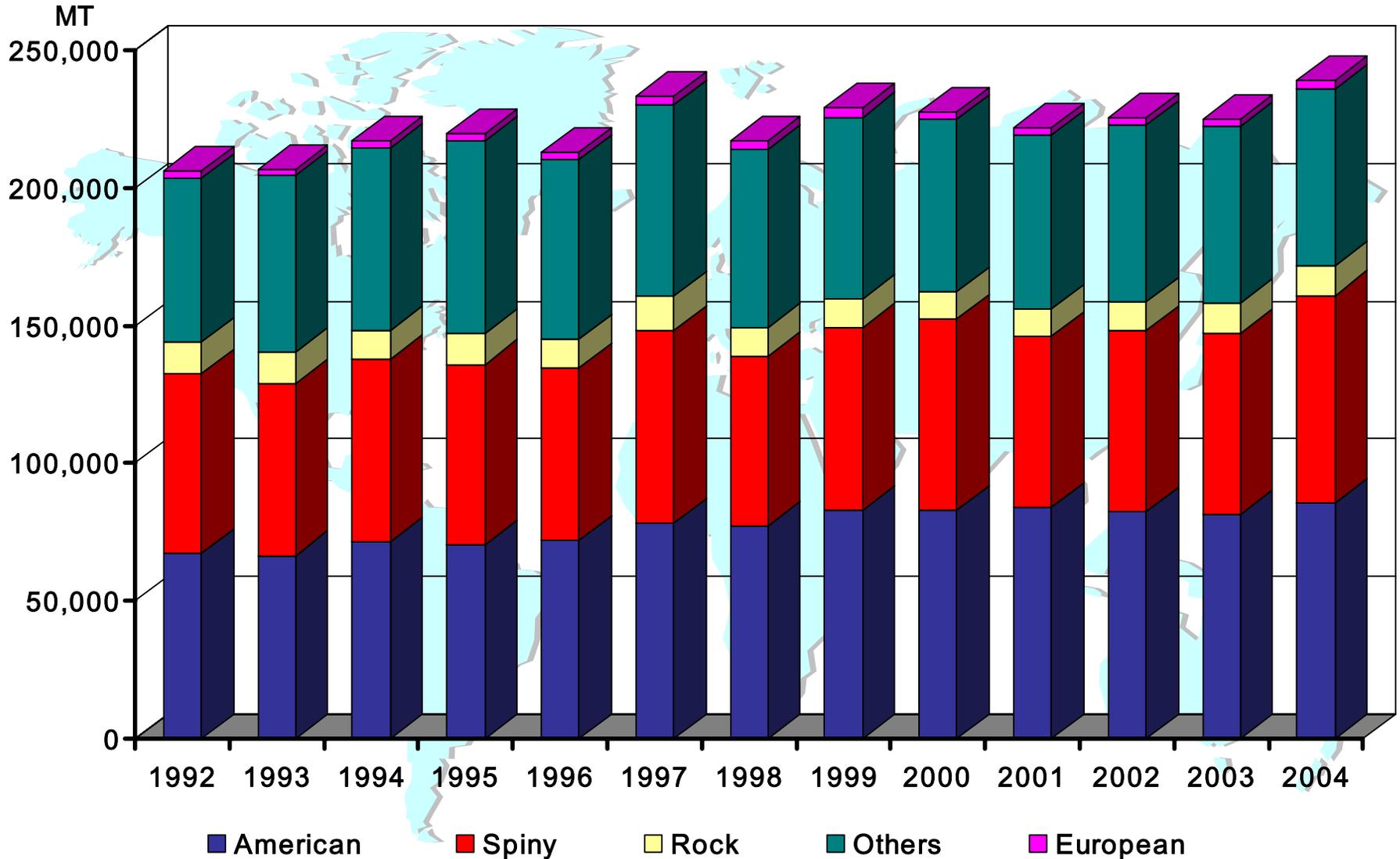
- World production of lobster increased steadily from 157,000 metric tons (MT) in 1980 to more than 233,000 MT in 1997 before stabilizing at levels near 230,000 MT through 2003 and rising to about 239,000 MT in 2004. Catches of American lobster (*Homarus americanus*) and spiny lobster (*Panulirus spp.*) accounted for 67 percent of world lobster production in 2004. Other important species included European lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) and rock lobster (*Jasus spp.*).
- The United States and Canada are the world's largest lobster producing countries, accounting for 37 percent of global production in 2004. Other major producers included the United Kingdom, Australia, among others.
- In the United States, lobsters rank third in terms of commercial landed value for fishery products, trailing only the harvests of shrimp and crabs. American lobster accounted for 94 percent of U.S. lobster production, followed by spiny and slipper lobsters. Maine led all states, with 81 percent of the 40,079 MT of American lobster landed in 2004. Massachusetts and Rhode Island were also important producers of American lobster. Spiny lobster is harvested primarily in Florida and California.
- World exports and imports of lobster grew steadily over the last decade. World lobster exports rose 87 percent, from \$1.2 billion in 1992 to \$2.2 billion in 2004, due primarily to increased sales of frozen and fresh/chilled products. Canada was the major exporter of live lobster products with \$371 million in 2004, followed by the United States with \$300 million. World lobster imports increased 63 percent, from \$1.3 billion in 1992 to \$2.1 billion in 2004, due mainly to increased demand for frozen and particularly live products in the hotel and restaurant sector. The United States was the major importer of live lobster with \$290 million in 2004, followed by Canada with \$138 million, and France, Spain and Italy, each with imports exceeding \$50 million. The United States remained the largest importer of all lobster products, accounting for \$1 billion or nearly 47 percent of global imports, followed by Japan with \$178 million.
- U.S. lobster exports grew by 245 percent in terms of value during 1992-2005, totaling \$345 million in 2005, due to increased sales to Canada and the European Union (EU). Canada remained the largest market, accounting for 48 percent of export sales. Most U.S. exports to Canada are processed and then sent back to the U.S. market for domestic consumption or to be exported to other countries. Sales to the EU, the largest consumption market for U.S. lobster, accounted for 43 percent of the exports. U.S. imports of lobster reached \$1.1 billion in 2005, up 119 percent from the 1992 level. Canada accounted for 64 percent of the imports.
- Lobster is a high-priced commodity with consumer preferences varying from country to country.

World Lobster Production by Country



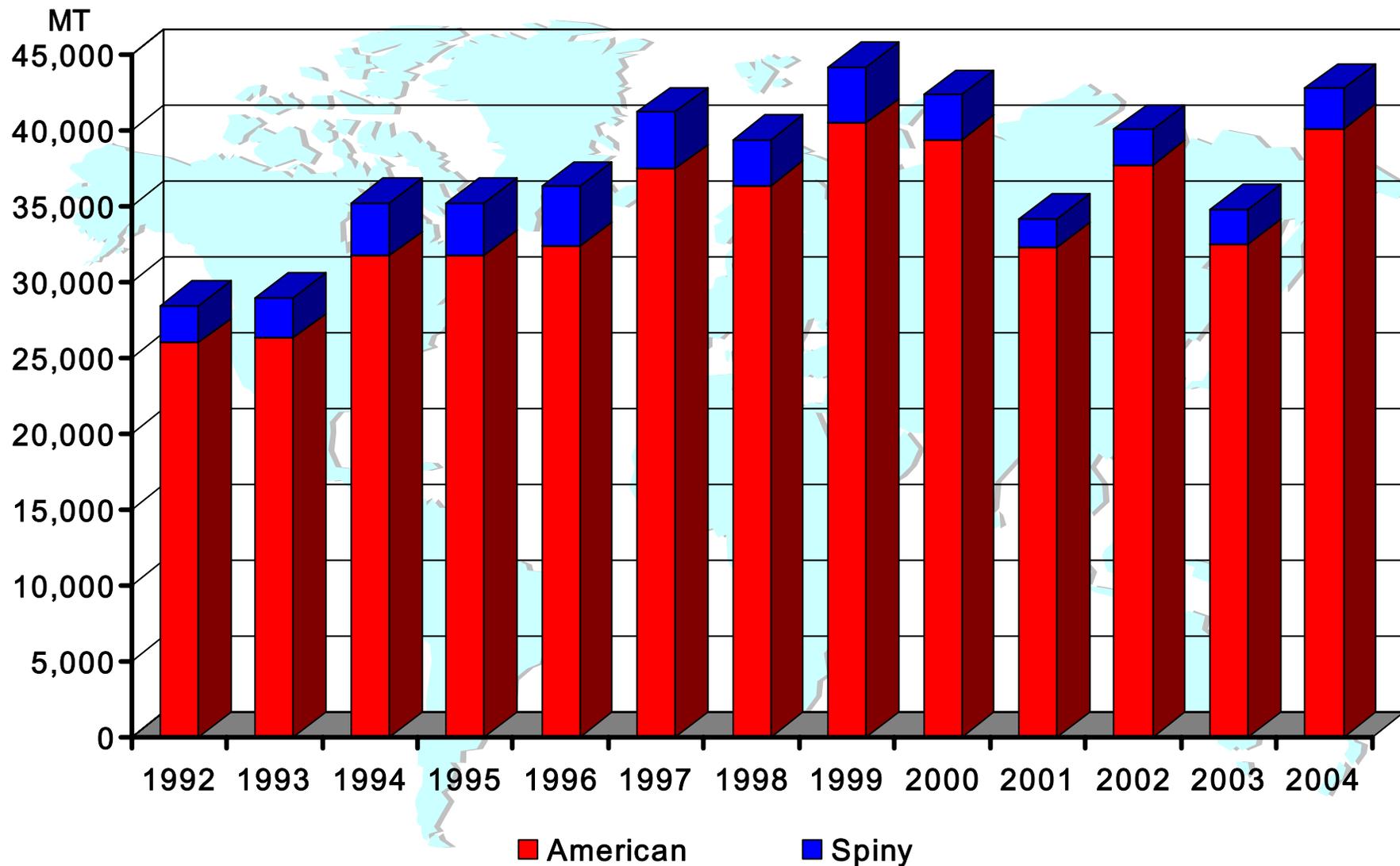
Source: FAO

World Lobster Production by Species



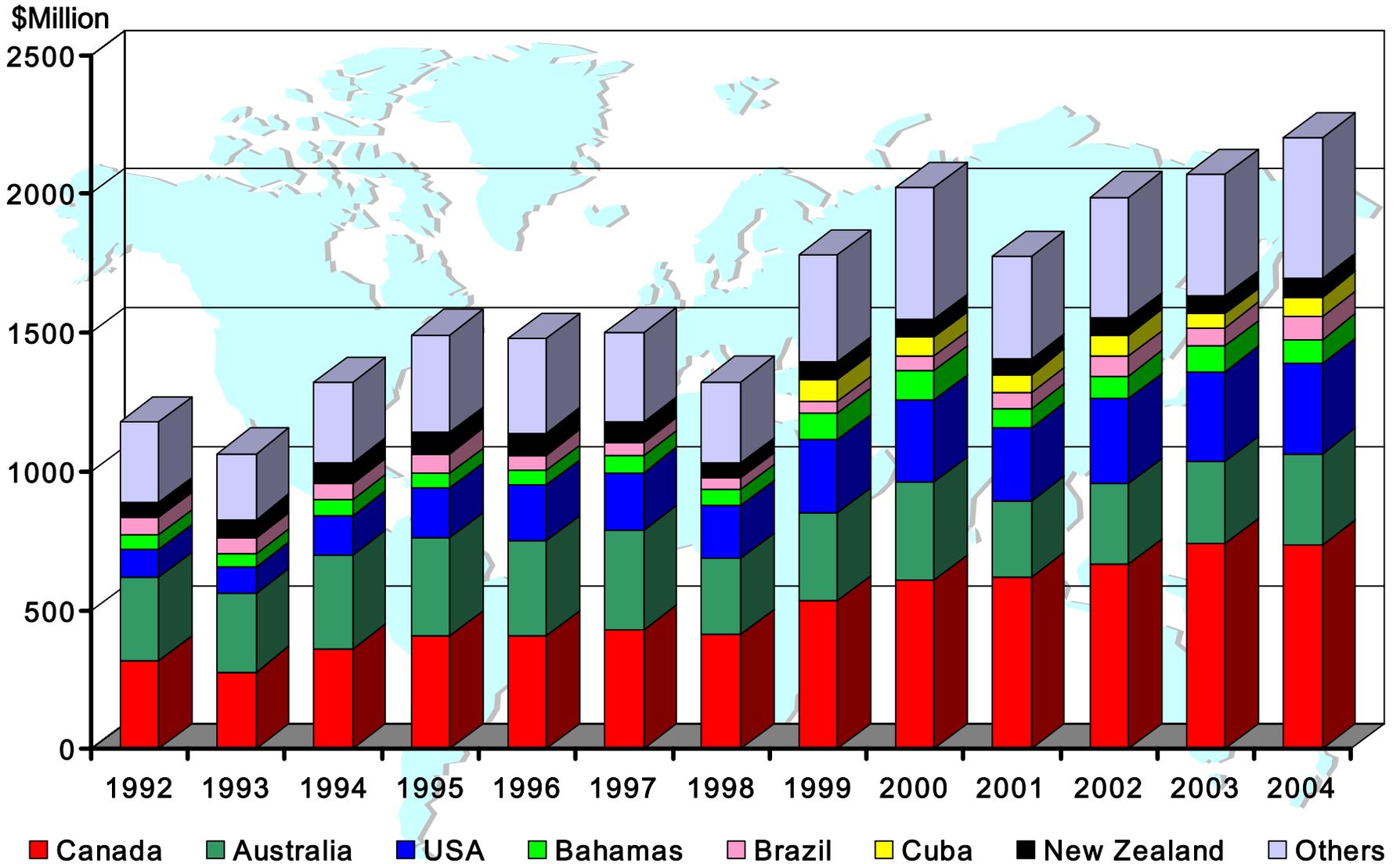
Source: FAO

U.S. Lobster Production by Species



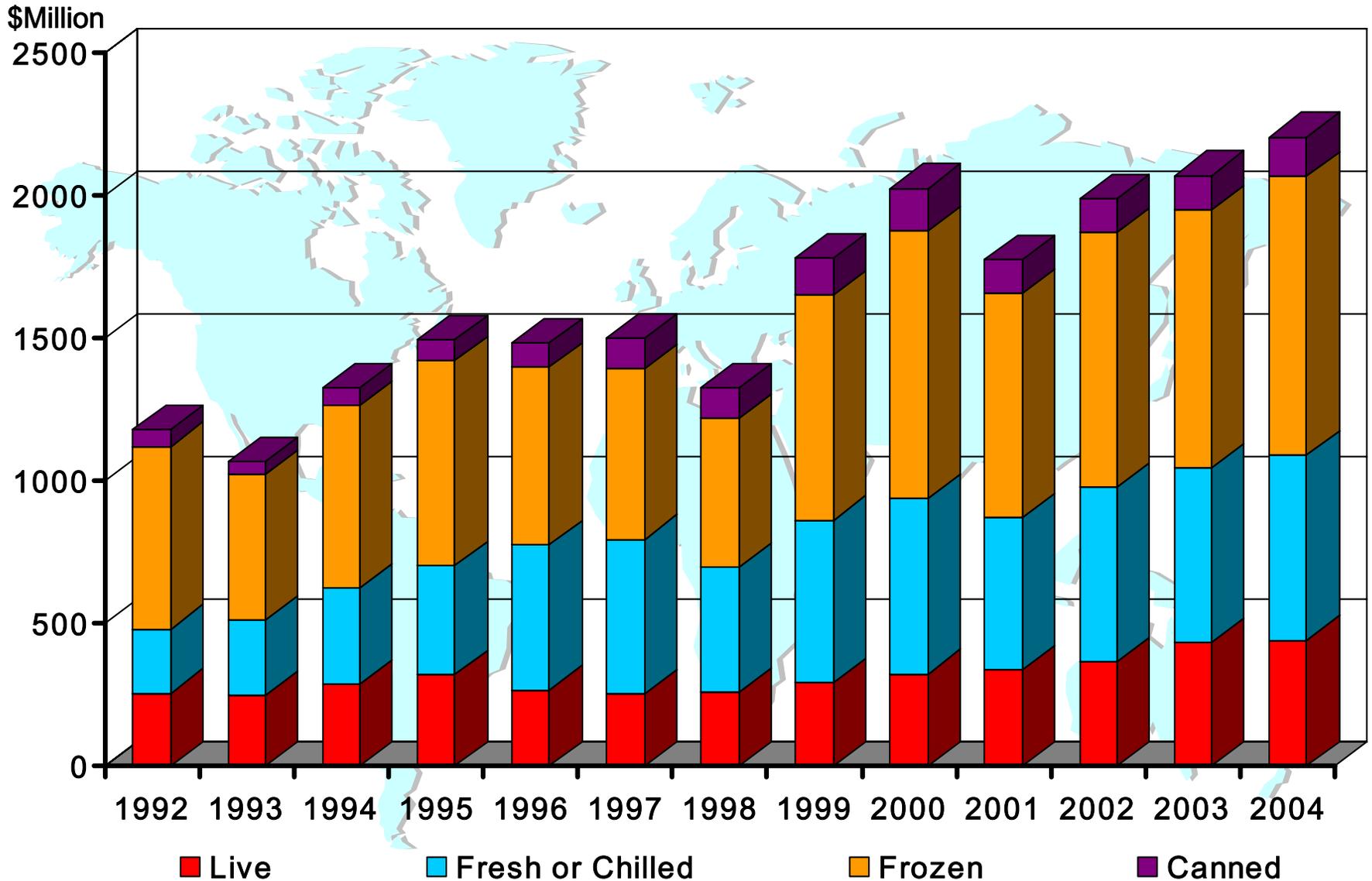
Source: NOAA/NMFS

World Lobster Exports by Country



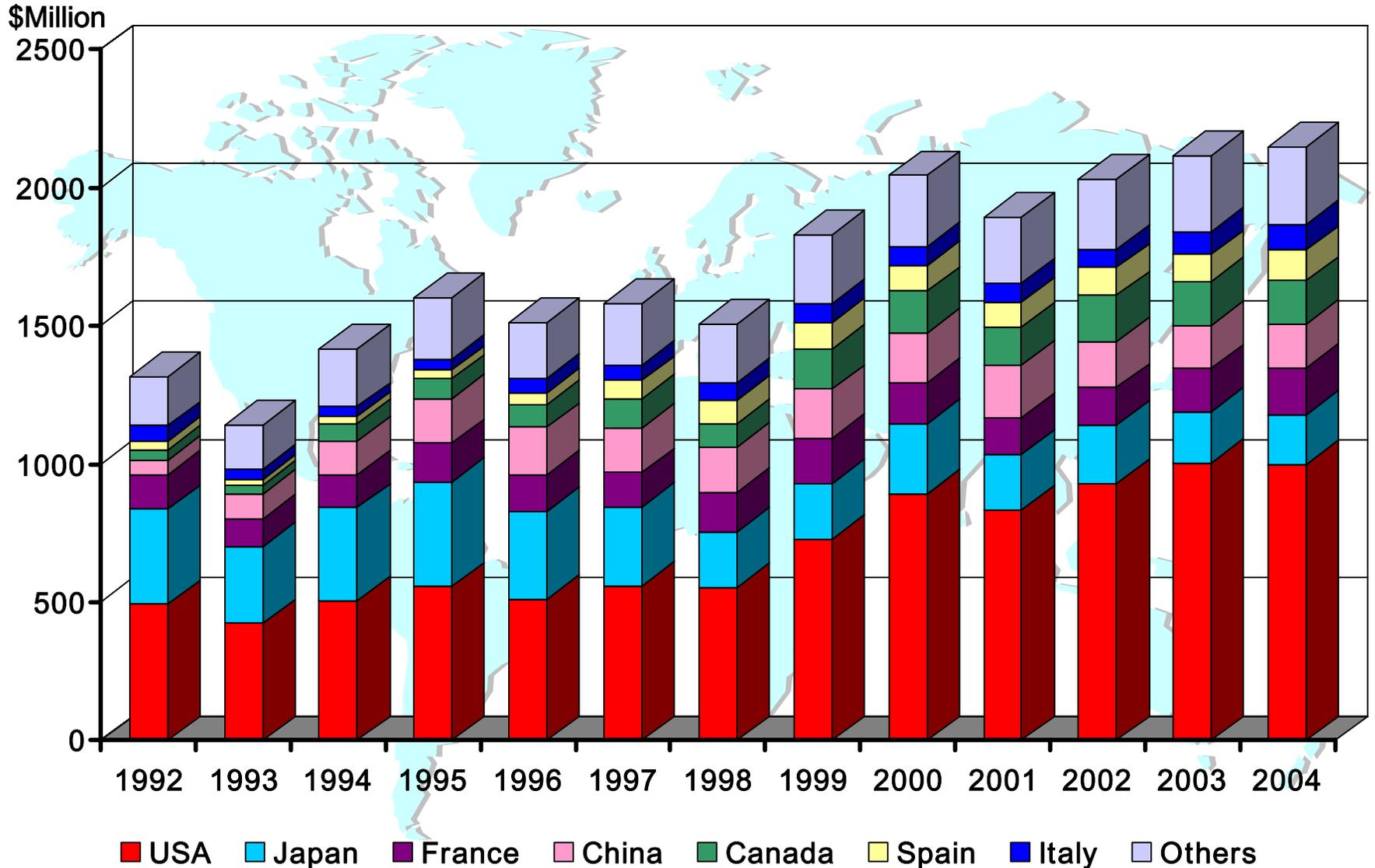
Source: FAO

World Lobster Exports by Product



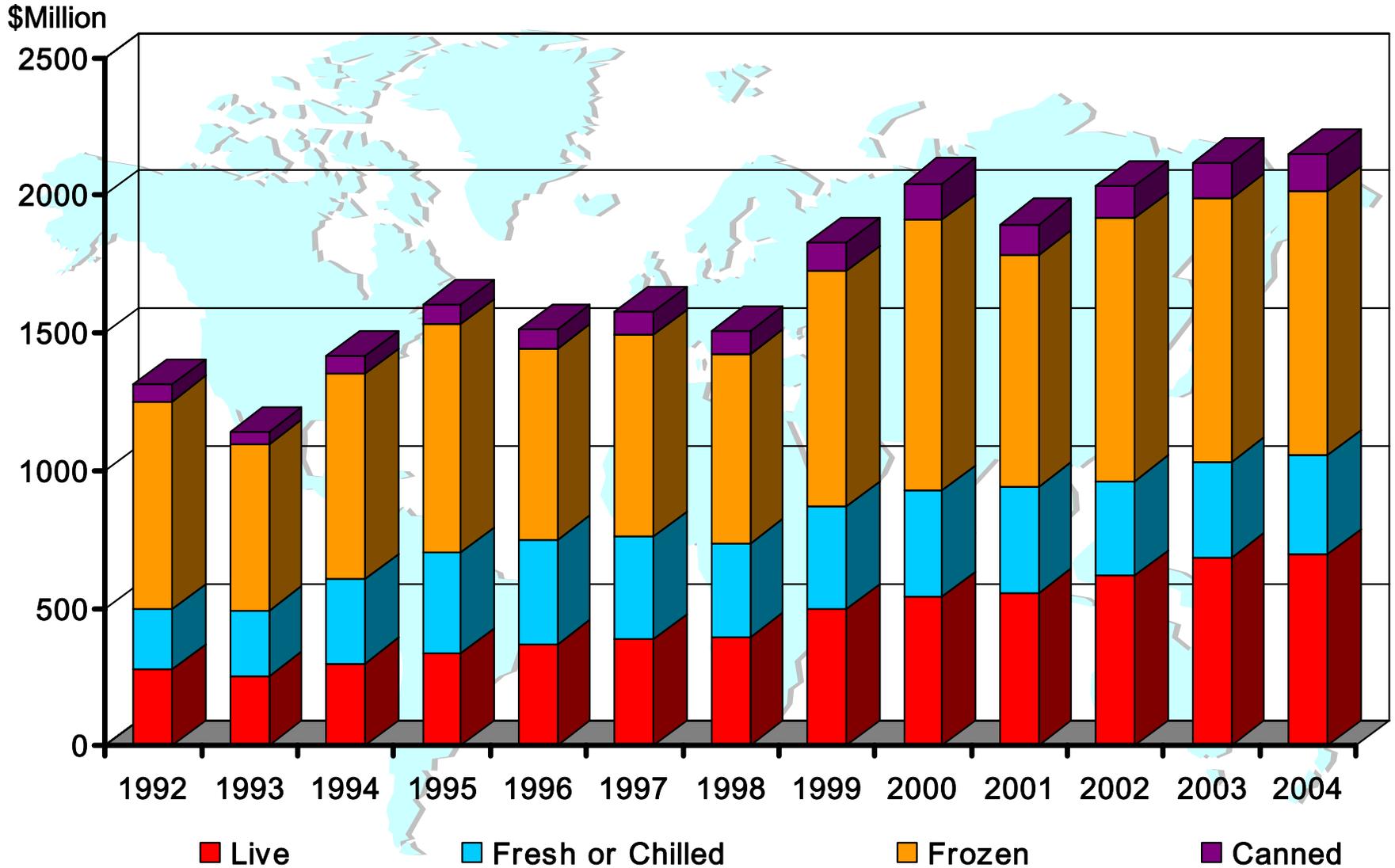
Source: FAO

World Lobster Imports by Country



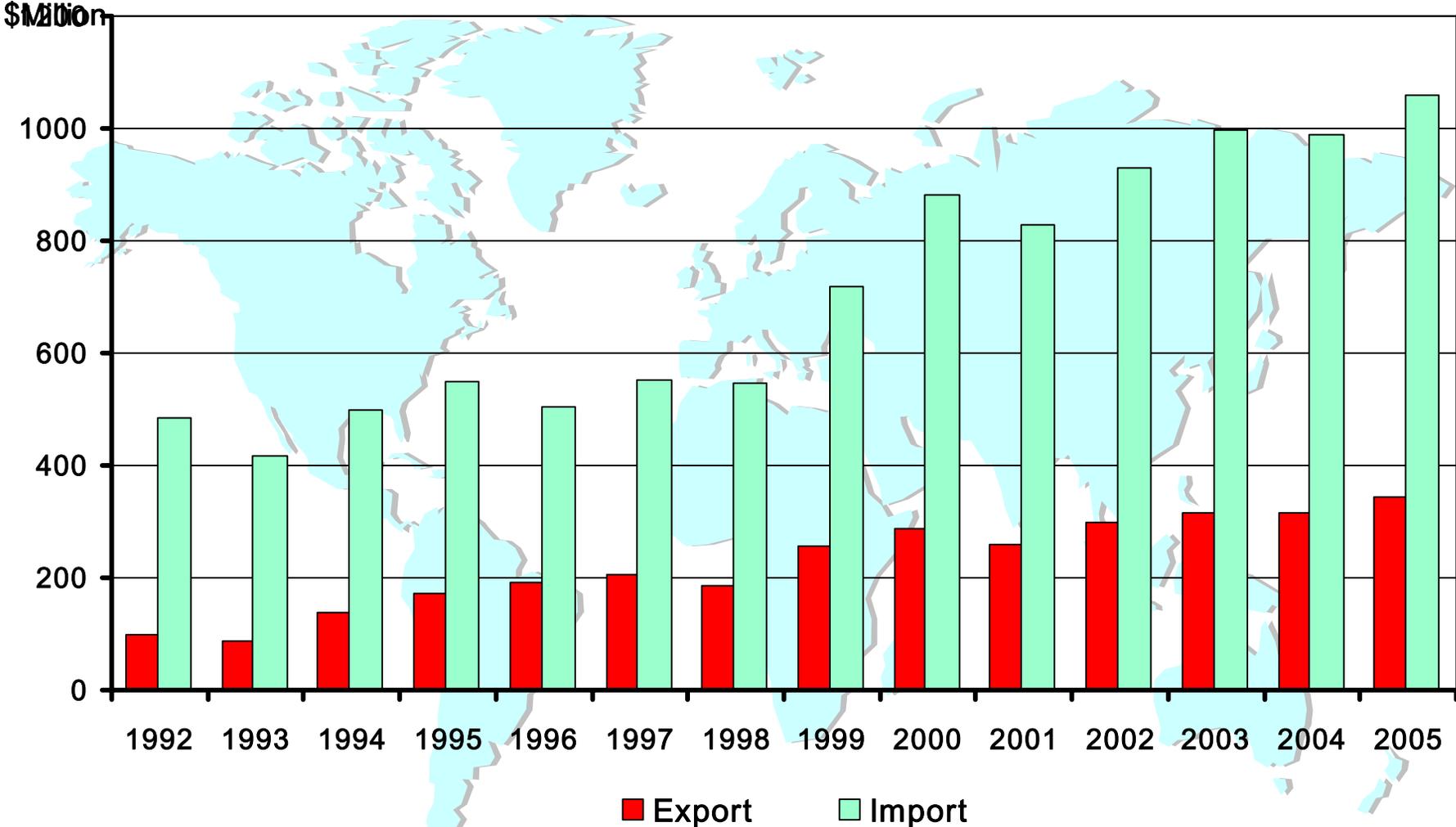
Source: FAO

World Lobster Imports by Product



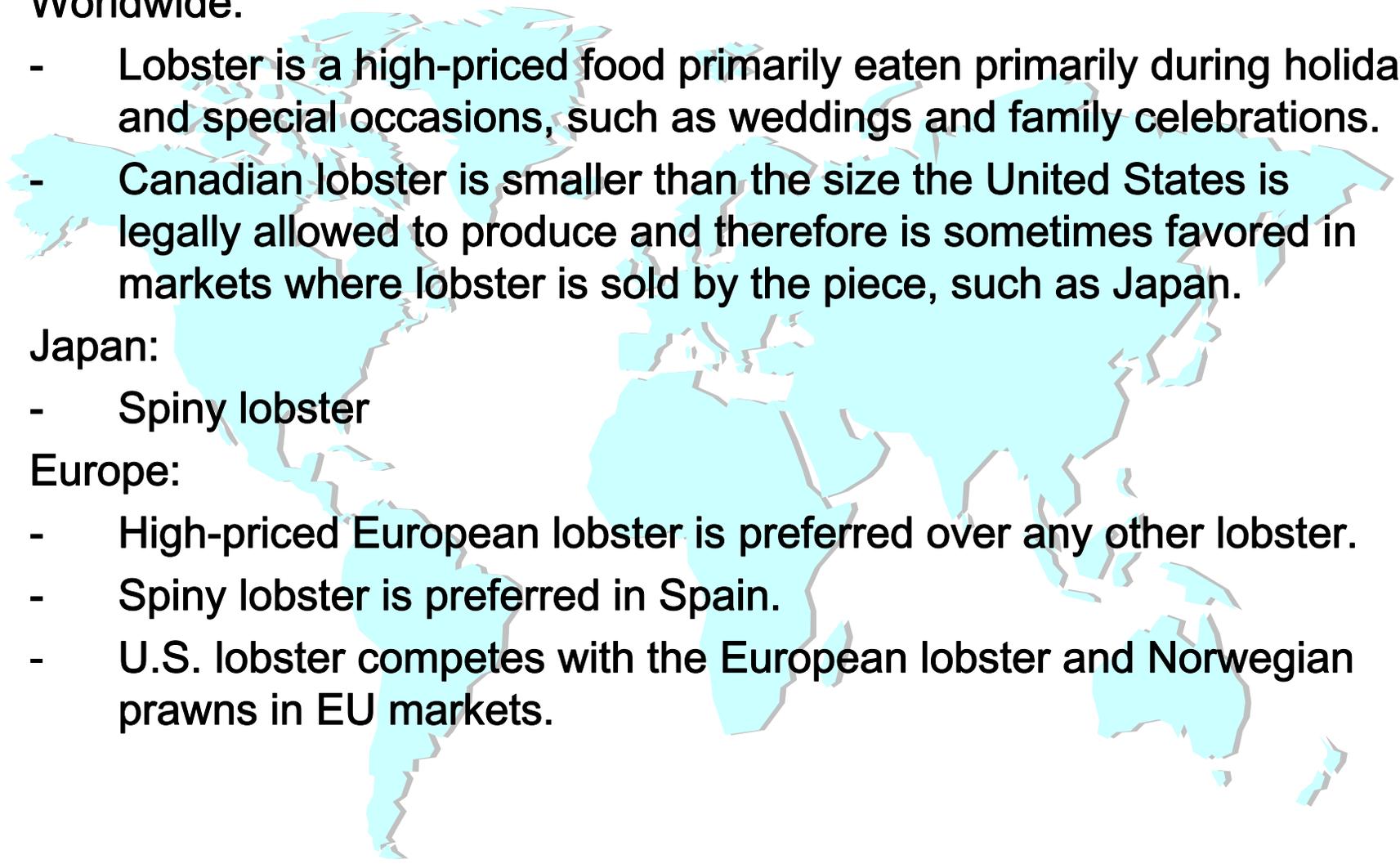
Source: FAO

U.S. Lobster Trade



Source: NOAA/NMFS

Consumer Preferences

- **Worldwide:**
 - Lobster is a high-priced food primarily eaten primarily during holidays and special occasions, such as weddings and family celebrations.
 - Canadian lobster is smaller than the size the United States is legally allowed to produce and therefore is sometimes favored in markets where lobster is sold by the piece, such as Japan.
 - **Japan:**
 - Spiny lobster
 - **Europe:**
 - High-priced European lobster is preferred over any other lobster.
 - Spiny lobster is preferred in Spain.
 - U.S. lobster competes with the European lobster and Norwegian prawns in EU markets.
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U.S. Industry Contacts

- **Maine Lobster Promotion Council**
Tel. (207) 287-5140/ Fax (207) 287-5143
www.maine lobster promo.com
- **Maine International Trade Center**
Tel. (207) 541-7400/ Fax (207) 541-7420
www.mitc.com
- **Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association**
Tel. (781) 545-6984/ Fax (781) 545-7837
www.lobstermen.com/default.asp
- **Food Export USA-Northeast**
Tel. (215) 829-9111/ Fax (215) 829-9777
www.foodexportusa.org